Extension Bulletin E-1200 March 1978

CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Action Pleats

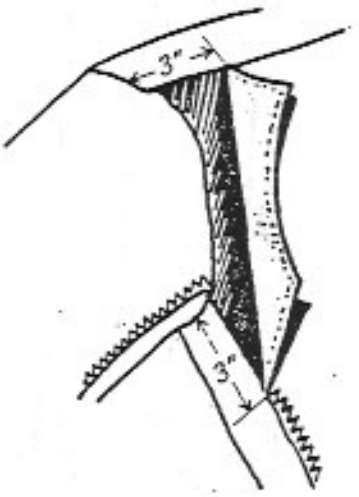
FOR GREATER COMFORT

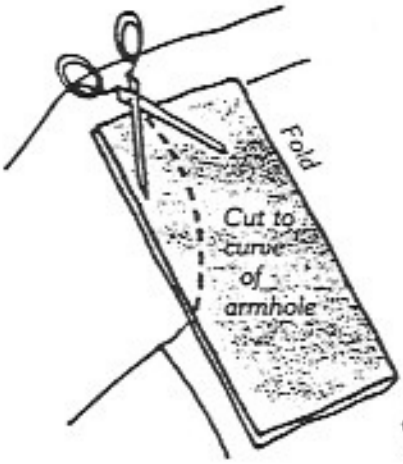
Shoulder Action Pleat

Action pleats can be put into the back or front shoulder areas of clothes and into jackets and coats as well as shirts and blouses.

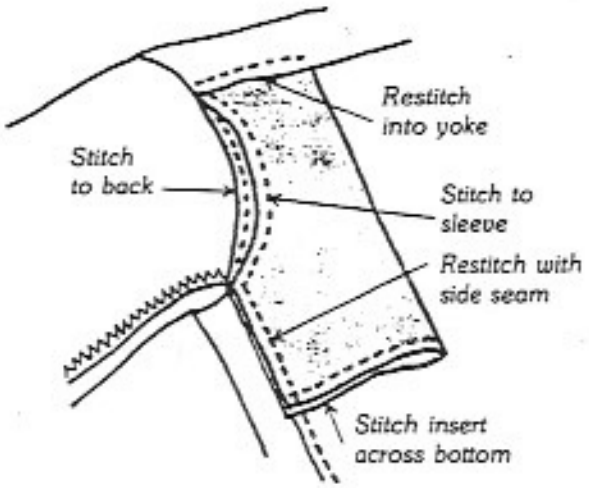
A matching or near matching piece of soft knit or woven fabric can be set in the armhole to provide more fabric space for reaching and moving without strain.

1. *Open the armhole back seam up to the yoke or up to the shoulder seam, depending on the style of shirt. Open up the yoke or shoulder seam for 3 inches. Open up the underarm side seam for 3 inches.*





2. *Using a matching fabric, cut out a fabric insert which matches the whole shoulder area—underarm armhole curve, and yoke or shoulder seam. Cut it double, on the fold.*



3. *With right sides facing, sew the armhole sections of the fabric insert to the armhole seam allowance of the sleeve and the shirt back.*
4. *Restitch the opened yoke or shoulder and underarm seams.*
5. *Edge finish raw edges to prevent ravelling.*
6. *Press the pleat area into position.*

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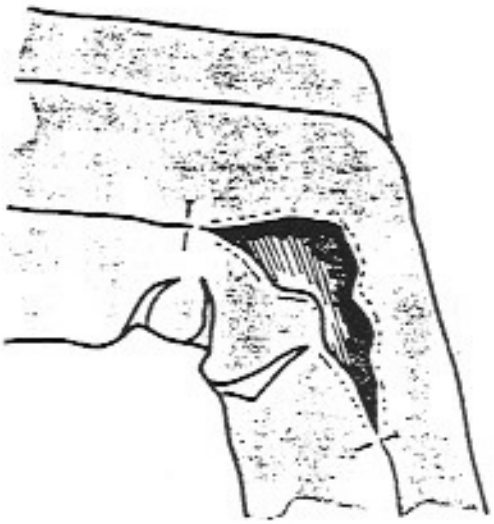
Knee Action Pleats

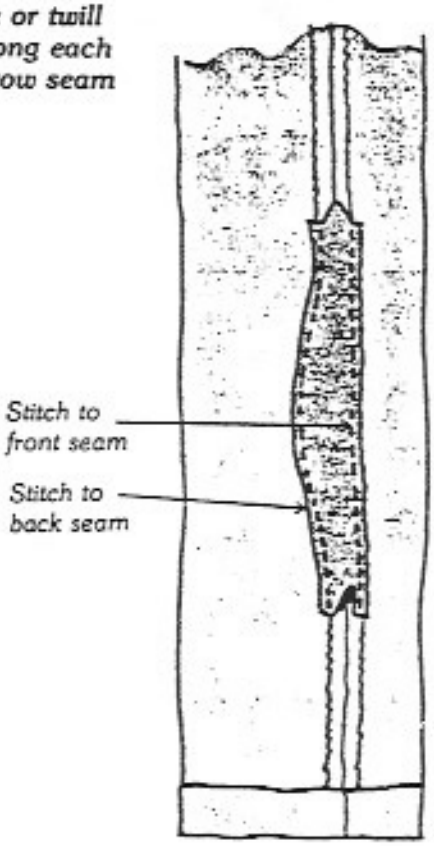
A matching or near matching fabric insert can also be sewn into the inside or outside of the knee area.

1. *While person is seated, mark the "knee-bend" position on the slacks seams.*
2. *Open up the seam in the "knee" area for 9-10 inches. A strip of hem tape or twill tape may have to be stitched along each open seam edge because of narrow seam allowances.*

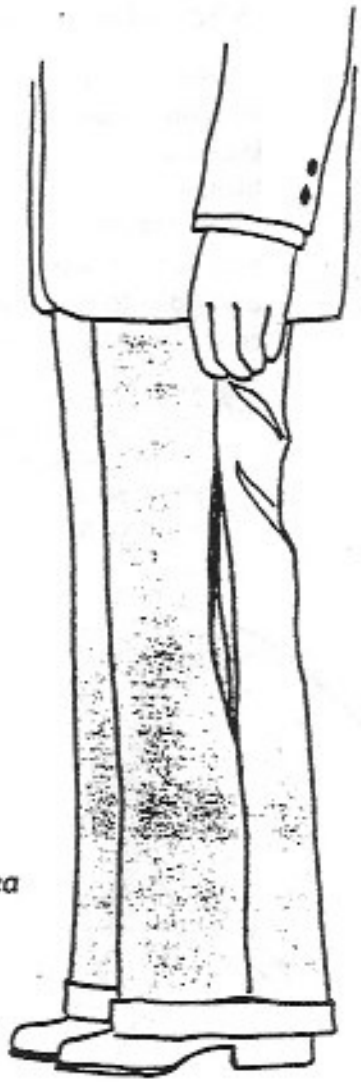


3. *Cut a strip of matching or near matching medium weight knit fabric or woven fabric on the bias. Cut it 2 inches longer than the knee opening and 1¾ to 2 inches wide.*

4. *With right sides facing, stitch the lengthwise sides of the fabric insert strip to the front and back leg seams of the slacks.*



5. *Press the pleat area into position.*



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Extension Bulletin E-1201 March 1978

CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

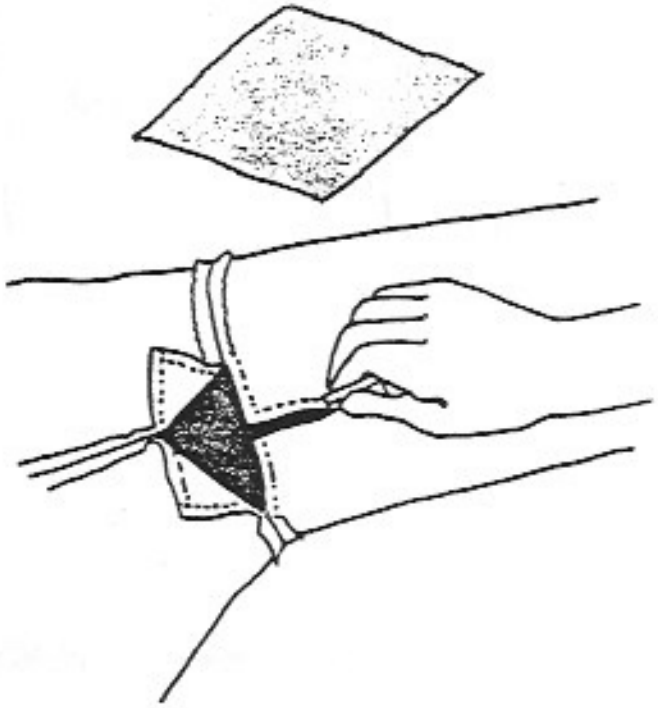
Clothing Comfort

WHEN USING CRUTCHES

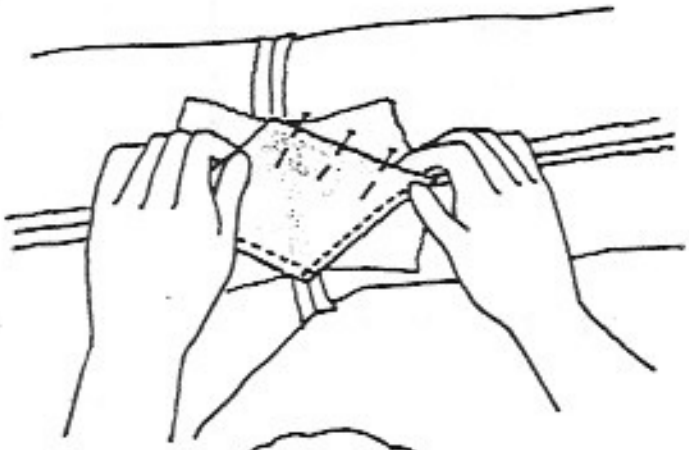
Underarm Gusset

A piece of fabric set in at the underarm (a gusset) gives extra room so that clothes don't bind, tear or hike up at the sides when using crutches. Use matching or near matching fabric. A fabric piece can be cut from the tails of "tuck-in" shirts.

1. *Cut a diamond-shaped piece of soft knit or woven fabric which is about 4" × 6", depending on the size of the garment.*



2. *Open up underarm and sleeve seams for 2¼ inches to 2½ inches.*
3. *Turn back the corners of underarm opening.*
4. *With right sides of the fabrics together, pin and sew the diamond-shaped piece into the underarm area of the garment.*



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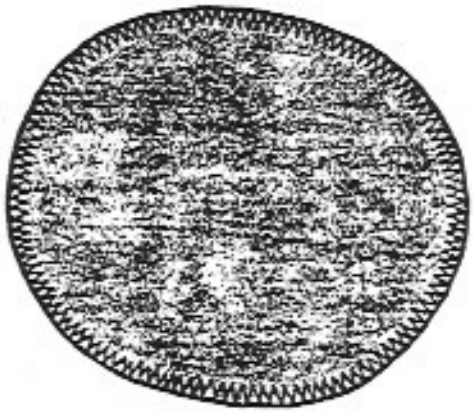
Underarm Protection

To prevent skin irritation from the rubbing of crutches, line inside the underarm with a soft, absorbent fabric shield. Use a velour, soft stretch terrycloth or several layers of cotton flannel.

1. *Cut out a round or oval-shaped piece of the shield fabric. Cut on the bias if it's a woven fabric.*
2. *Finish off the edge(s) of the oval fabric piece.*



3. *Set it into the underarm area of the garment.*
4. *Attach it to the armhole and underarm seams with firm but flexible stitches that "give" when strain is placed on the garment.*

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Extension Bulletin E-1202 March 1978

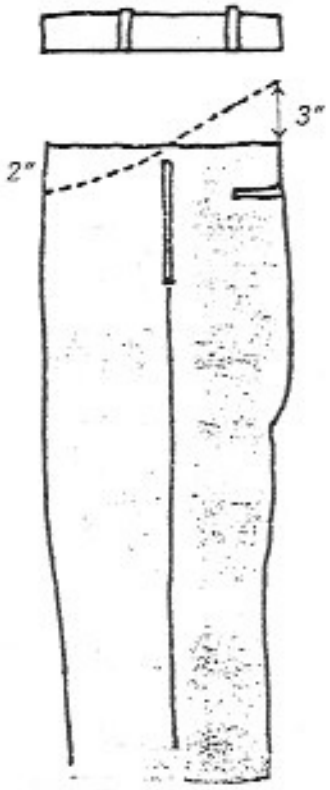
CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

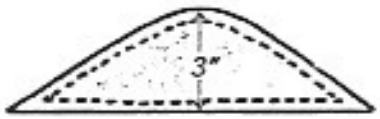
Comfort for Wheelchair Travel

Slacks

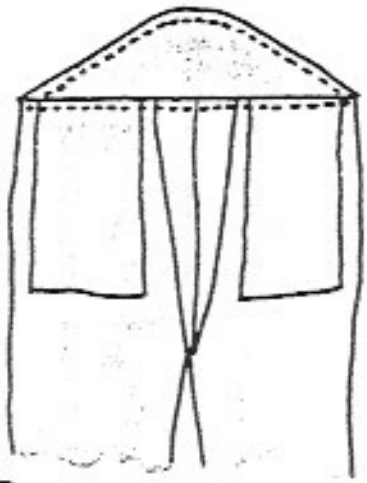
Most clothes are designed for the standing figure. Sitting shortens the front torso and lengthens the back. People who sit quite continuously can have a more comfortable fit by shortening regular slacks in the front and adding fabric in the back.

1. *Remove the waistband and belt loops.*
2. *Cut off about 2 inches at the center front at the zipper area, and taper up to the original side seams of the slacks.*



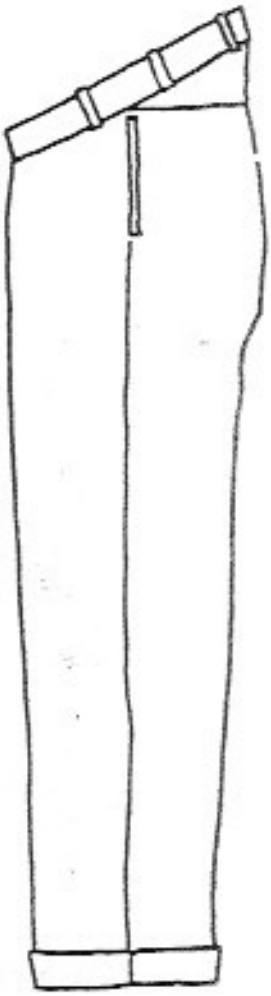


3. *Using a matching or near matching medium weight knit fabric, cut out a triangular section which is 3 inches deep at the center, the width of the back, and tapers to the slack side seams. Add ⅝ inch for seams.*



4. *Sew the base of the triangle fabric section to the back waistline of the slacks.*
5. *Stitch the waistband and belt loops back on.*

(This alteration can also be done to skirts.)



Slacks and skirts can also be made more comfortable around the waist by removing the waistband, setting in a V-shaped fabric section at the center back, and then replacing the waistband.

Jackets and Coats

Excess fabric can be uncomfortable to sit on, especially for long periods of time.

- Lengthen the side vent of jackets or open up the side seams from the bottom of the jackets to hip bone level. This will help to prevent "bunching up" of fabric when sitting.

- Shorten the backs of jackets and coats to the back length of the person when seated. The back of the coat need only reach to the seat of the chair.
- Shorten jackets in front to eliminate excess fabric.
- Shoulder action pleats can also be put into jackets and coats for freer movement.
- Collarless styles are often more comfortable and don't "ride up."

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Extension Bulletin E-1203 March 1978

CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Convenience Fastenings

Easy slipover or slip-on clothing styles of knitted fabric and especially with large openings for the arms, head and legs may eliminate the need for fastenings or keep them to a minimum.

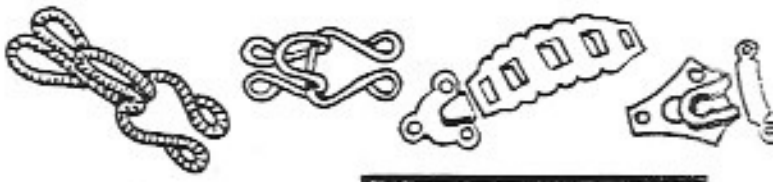
Clothes with side or front opening, longer openings and fasteners within easy reach and easy to grasp can make dressing and undressing easier. The following types of fastenings offer such possibilities. Their usefulness will vary with individual preferences.

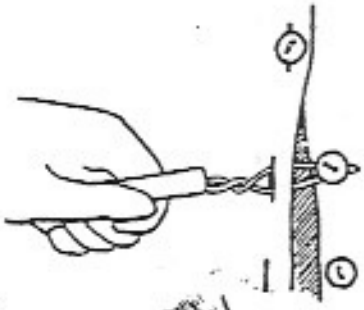
Buttons and Buttonholes

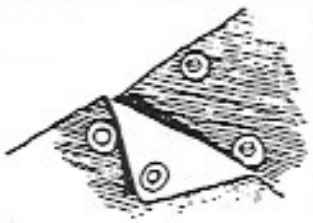
- Large somewhat textured buttons are easier to grasp.
- Buttonholes should be large enough to easily slip over the button. Sometimes vertical buttonholes are more easily managed. A buttoner, purchased or made, can assist when finger movement is limited.
- Elastic loops sewed into a seam or on the edge of an opening can be easily slipped over buttons.
- Sew buttons on with elastic thread to slide the hand through without unbuttoning.
- Make a slip-through cufflink type sleeve by sewing a button on both ends of the cuff (on the right side) and then attaching an elastic thread chain between the buttons.

Hooks and Eyes or Bars

Use large, trouser type hooks and bars on waistbands, several bars on the band can make it adjustable. Large hook and eye fasteners are easier to manage. There are several types of bars used with hooks.







Snap Fasteners

Large snaps or gripper snaps are easier to manipulate but require pressure to close—are best used when a closing will not have much strain or tension.

Zipper Slide Fastenings

- Zipper weight and flexibility should coordinate with the weight of the fabric and any strain the fastening will have.
- Zippers should lock securely and slide easily; a lubrication wax can help to make "zipping" easier.
- Fasten a plastic or metal ring or a thread loop to the zipper pull tab to make it easier to grasp.
- A thread chain loop on the garment at the bottom end of a zipper will help the person with limited hand functioning to stabilize the zipper when closing it.
- Separating zippers can completely open a seam such as the sides of slacks or skirts. Zippers which will be next to the skin should be backed with an underlay of fabric or tape.

Hook and Loop Pressure Tape

(A tape with synthetic fiber hooks on one side, loops on the other which grip together and peel apart)

Hook and loop pressure tape can be used in small pieces or a continuous strip. A continuous strip may create a stiff, non-pliable line which could be uncomfortable for the wearer.

The holding strength of such tape is dependent upon the amount of tape used and the amount of pressure applied in closing.

- Waistband on clothes can be made adjustable with hook and loop pressure tape.
- Hook and loop pressure tape can replace buttons and buttonholes. To keep the "buttoned" look, the buttons can be removed and sewed on top of the buttonhole.
- Hook and loop pressure tape can be used to partially or completely open seams on clothes (seams of slacks or skirts) or to insert full length front, side, or side openings to clothes.
- Keep hook and loop pressure tape closed when laundering clothes so lint doesn't collect and lessen the effectiveness of the grip.

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Extension Bulletin E-1204 March 1978

CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Lap Robe Skirts

COORDINATED COMFORT

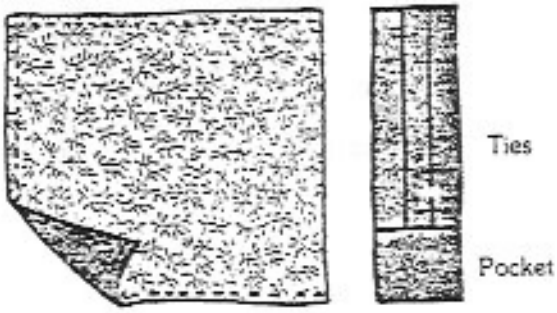
A lap robe that is warm and that has a long skirt look can be made to match or coordinate with a dress or blouse. The robe will be reversible.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

1¼ to 1¼ yards of two 45-inch width fabrics depending on the wearer's height.

An additional ¼ yard of one fabric for ties and a pocket.

1. *Cut off additional length from longer fabric.*
2. *With right sides facing, sew the two fabric pieces together on the long sides and one end (the 45-inch width).*



3. *Turn and press.*
4. *Edgestitch the three sides to keep the edges from turning. This finishes the sides and bottom of the skirt.*
5. *Put a line of gathering along the unfinished end of the skirt for the waistline.*
6. *Make a narrow waistband to finish off the waistline and extend into ties which will be long enough to wrap around to the front.*
7. *Finish a separate pocket and stitch on to the waist.*
8. *Attach the waistband tie to the skirt top.*

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Hoop Apron Skirt

Make a skirt similar to the reversible skirt except shorten one fabric side at the waistline to serve only as a lining. This eliminates some fabric bulk at the waist. This skirt will not be reversible.

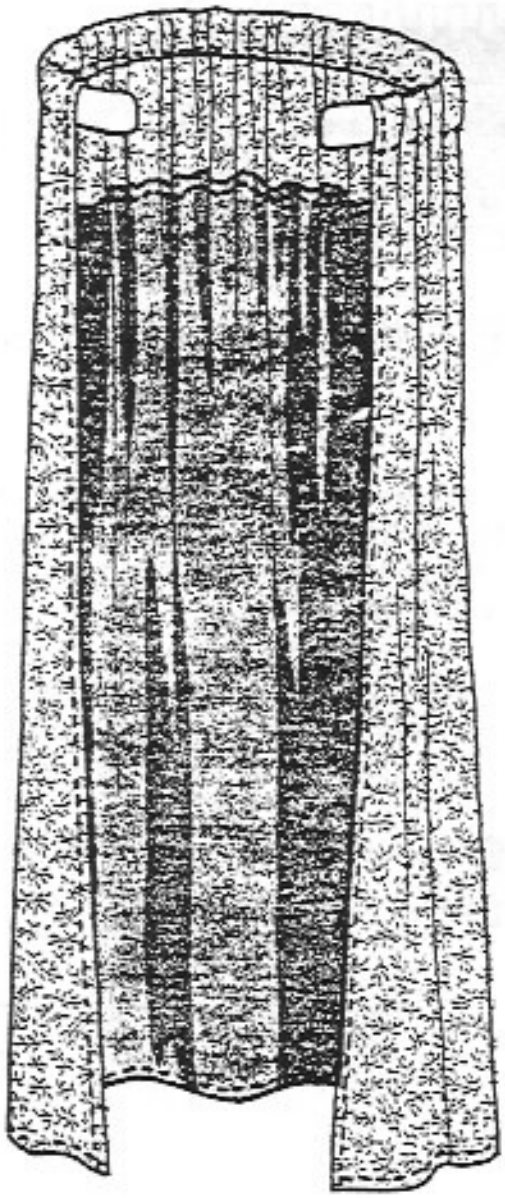
SUPPLIES NEEDED

1¼ to 1¼ yards of 45-inch wide fabric (depending on height of wearer)

1 yard of 45-inch width fabric for the lining (can be a napped or fleece fabric for more warmth)

1 apron hoop

1. *Right sides facing, sew the two fabric pieces together on the long sides and one end (the 45 inch width).*
2. *Turn, press, and edgestitch the three sides.*
3. *Stitch the unfinished top edge of the lining to the outer fabric.*
4. *Make a 1½ inch hem at the unfinished end for the waistline.*
5. *Slip the apron hoop through the hem to make an adjustable waistline.*



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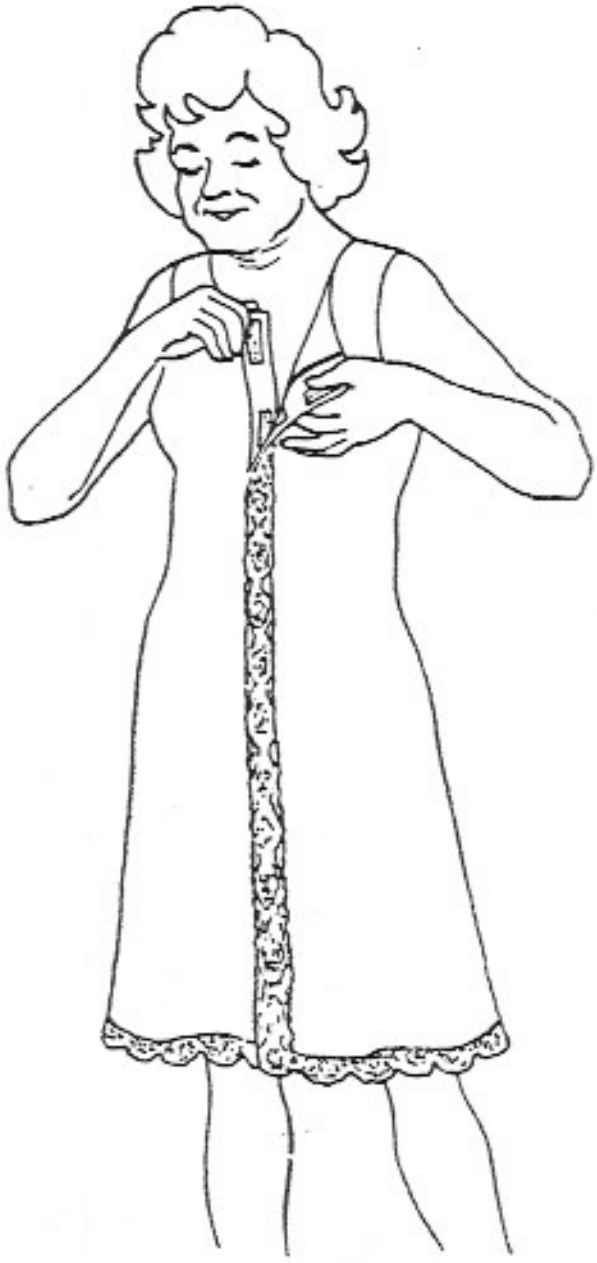
Extension Bulletin E-1205 March 1978

CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Undercover Convenience

Underclothes and outerwear should be comfortable and easy to put on and take off. Larger sizes will help if they are not too bulky. Cotton and cotton blend underclothes are also more absorbent and comfortable. Here are a few ideas for altering underclothes.



Altering Slips to Wrap Style

A **full length slip** will be much easier to put on and take off if it wraps instead of slipping over the head.

1. *Cut a woven fabric slip down the center front.*
2. *Add a double fold strip of fabric to each side to make a 1-2 inch overlap.*
3. *Fasten with spaced strips of hook and loop pressure tape.*
4. *Wide nylon lace hem tape can be stitched down the overlap to add a decorative touch.*

A **half slip** can also be changed to a wrap style.

1. *Cut the slip apart lengthwise down the center front or slightly off to one side.*
2. *Add a wide fabric extension to one side for an underlap.*
3. *Finish off the other edge with a narrow hem. Sew lace along the edge if desired.*
4. *Fasten with strips of hook and loop pressure tape at the waistline to make the slip adjustable.*

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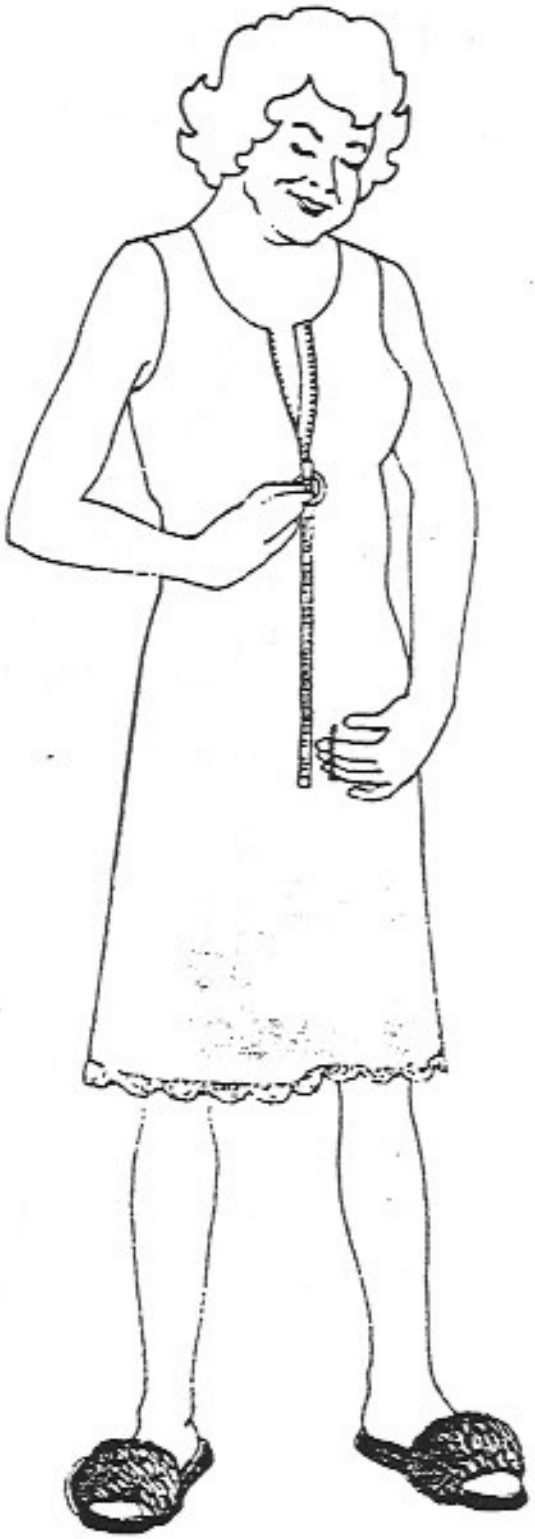


Undercover Convenience

Zipping a Full-length Slip

Set a lightweight zipper into the slashed center front of a slip. This method is very suitable for knit slips. Use a soft, flexible nylon or polyester coil zipper which is at least 20 inches long.

1. *Sew the zipper in with a very small seam so that it is exposed. Then the slip will not be made smaller in size.*
2. *Add a fabric facing (can use wide twill tape) underneath the zipper to protect the skin.*
3. *Make a thread chain loop at the zipper pull tab to make it easier to grasp.*
4. *Add another thread chain (about 1½ to 2 inches long) down along side the bottom of the zipper. The wearer can slip several fingers into the loop to hold down the fabric for easier zipping.*

Slip Straps

Slips with built up straps are often more comfortable to wear because they don't bind or slip off the shoulders as easily. Narrow straps can be made more comfortable by sewing them on to a wider ribbon or tape.

Opening Bras in the Front

Some front-closing bras can be purchased. Regular back-closing bras can be altered to open in front, but they must be the kind that can be taken apart at the center front. The method will depend somewhat on the style of bra.

METHOD I—*Supplies Needed:*

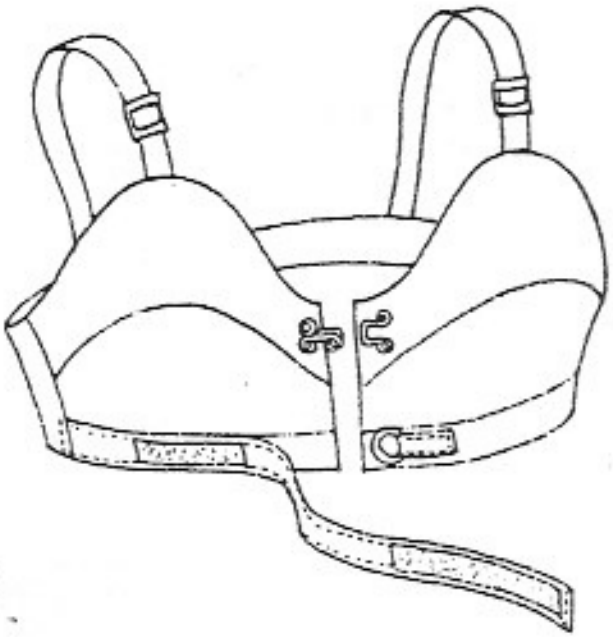
A 24-inch strip of twill tape (1 inch wide)

3 to 4 inches of white hook and loop pressure tape (1 inch wide)

One large tailor's hook and eye

One plastic curtain ring (1 inch in diameter) or metal belt ring.

1. *Remove stitching which holds center front of bra together.*
2. *Sew the edges of the twill tape together to make a 12 inch long strip.*
3. *Insert into lower right bra seam and machine stitch.*
4. *Attach plastic ring to lower left side of bra with a strip of material about ½ inch wide when finished and 2 inches long, looped over the curtain ring and sewed to bra (as illustrated).*
5. *Place tailor's hook and eye (as illustrated) making sure the bra is brought over to the original stitched position. Hook on right—eye on left.*



6. *Put bra on; bring strip through plastic ring and fold to determine placement of hook and loop pressure tape strips. Then attach pressure tape, stitching all four sides.*
7. *Remove hooks and eyes from the back of the bra and sew it shut.*

Note: If a person is left-handed, the above steps should be done on opposite sides.

METHOD II

1. *Open up the center front of the bra.*
2. *Sew in a bra repair package which can be purchased.*
3. *Sew the hook section to one side and the eye section to the other so that they join without adding any width at the center front.*
4. *Remove the hooks and eyes at the back and sew the back opening shut.*

T-shirt Tricks

All cotton or cotton blend T-shirts are more absorbent and comfortable to wear. When altering T-shirts, launder the shirts and all other materials such as braids, tapes, zippers, etc. that will be used *before fixing them*. This will prevent differences in shrinking when the T-shirt is washed regularly.

Open shoulder seams will make it easier to slip T-shirts over the head. Polo shirts with raglan sleeves can be fixed the same way.

1. *Open up the shoulder seams, being careful not to stretch the edges of the open seams. (Stitching along each side of the seam before opening it up will prevent stretching.)*
2. *Bind the seam edges with twill tape (1 inch wide) so that the edges will overlap.*
3. *Cut narrow strips of hook and loop pressure tape and sew onto the bound edges.*

A separating zipper can be used to completely open up a slip over T-shirt. Use an open-end zipper about 22 inches long, depending on the size of the T-shirt. The zipper should end at the waistline so that the remaining shirt can be tucked into pants.

1. *Cut open the T-shirt, beginning at the neckline rib seam and continuing at a slight slant, down through the bottom of the shirt.*
2. *Stitch the zipper into the opening, beginning the zipper at the neck.*
3. *Turn under the remaining edges and edge stitch.*
4. *Sew a strip of wide twill tape underneath the zipper to protect the skin.*

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